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S P E E C H
OF THE
HON. JOHN M. CLAYTON,
DELIVERED AT
A PUBLIC DINNER
Given to him at Wilmington, on the 16th November, 1850,
BY THE
WHIGS OF DELAWARE,
As a testimonial of their gratitude for his
LONG AND FAITHFUL PUBLIC SERVICES;
TOGETHER WITH THE
PROCEEDINGS CONNECTED WITH THAT FESTIVAL.

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PREFACE.

The speech of Mr. Clayton, made at a Public Dinner given to him, some time since at Wilmington, together with the proceedings connected with it, were published in the "Philadelphia North American" immediately after they occurred.

A Resolution was passed by the Committee, directing that the speech, and the proceedings should be published in a pamphlet.

That Resolution, however, was never carried into effect.

From the repeated attacks made upon the administration of General Taylor, it has been thought advisable by some of the friends of that administration, to re-publish in an enduring form, its able vindication in the speech of Mr. Clayton delivered at that dinner.

This vindication is due to the public justice of the country. It is due to the characters of the individuals who composed the cabinet of General Taylor. But above all, it is due to the memory of that beloved patriot, whose ashes now lie mouldering in the dust—whose fame is a part of the public property of the country, and whose name will endure as long as virtue, valor, and patriotism continue to be cherished by mankind.

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, }
January 15th, 1853. }

(From the Delaware State Journal, Oct. 18th, 1850.)

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER

TO

HON. JOHN M. CLAYTON.

The Whigs of Wilmington held a very spirited meeting at the MOKUNA HALL, on Monday evening last, at which JOHN CONNELL, Esq., presided. By an unanimous vote it was determined to tender our distinguished fellow-citizen, the HON. JOHN M. CLAYTON, the compliment of a PUBLIC DINNER; and a Committee of Fifty Whigs was appointed to wait upon him for the above purpose. Arrangements will be made to accommodate all who may favor the occasion with their presence. It is to be a general thing, and none are to consider themselves excluded. The following are the names of the gentlemen appointed, and the correspondence on the occasion :

Hon. JOHN WALES, *Chairman.*

Capt. Wm. Thatcher,
Jos. T. Warner,
Charles Warner,
John H. Price,
Joseph M. Barr,
John A. Duncan,
George Richardson,
Edward B. McClees,
Wm. M. Sink,
Samuel Platt,
Capt. Alex. Kelley,
Dr. A. H. Grimshaw,
John R. Latimer,
Charles I. Dupont,
Wm. H. Naff,
John Caulk,
John Miller,
H. R. Bringhurst,
John Connell,
Enoch Roberts,
Maj. Philip Reybold,
Thomas M. Clark,
Thomas Scott,
Springer McDaniel,
Alexis J. Dupont,

Benj. T. Biggs,
James Murdick, Jr.,
Dr. Barstow,
Henry Garrett,
James Campbell,
Wm. K. McClees,
John Allen,
Wm. H. Griffin,
Wm. H. England,
James C. Aikin,
Benjamin Gibbs,
H. G. Banning,
Jacob Jefferis,
E. C. Stotsenberg,
Cyrus Pyle,
Rathmell Wilson,
Maj. Wm. Rothwell,
Samuel Burnham,
George Z. Tybout,
John C. Clark,
Lewis Thompson,
J. J. Henry,
Anthony J. Higgins,
Dr. A. C. Reynolds.

On motion, the meeting adjourned to meet again on Wednesday evening at half past seven o'clock, at the same place, to hear the Report of the Committee.

JOHN CONNELL, Chairman.

WM. K. McCLEES, Secretary.

WILMINGTON, October 15, 1850.

SIR :

At a meeting of a large number of your friends and fellow-citizens, held in this city last evening, for the purpose of making known to you their high appreciation of your public services, and to testify their esteem and respect for you personally, the undersigned were appointed a committee to invite your attendance at a Dinner, to be given on as early a day as may meet your convenience to be present.

Your long, useful and eminent career, in the Senate of the United States, as a representative of Delaware, and your connection with the late administration of the lamented TAYLOR, in which you took so distinguished a part, by the able and successful management of the foreign relations of our country, have increased the attachment and admiration of your friends, and render this mark of their respect but an act of justice to a tried and faithful public servant.

The Committee, therefore, most cordially unite with their fellow-citizens in tendering you this invitation, and earnestly hope that it will be in your power to accept it, and afford to your many political and personal friends an opportunity of showing you their regard.

Very Respectfully,

Your friends and fellow-citizens,

JOHN WALES and others.

HON. JOHN M. CLAYTON,

Buena Vista.

BUENA VISTA, DEL., Oct. 16, 1850.

GENTLEMEN :

I accept with pleasure the invitation of my friends and fellow-citizens, so kindly tendered by your letter in their behalf, to meet them at a public dinner; and as my private affairs, which have been much deranged by attention to public duties and engagements during a long period, require my care during the present month, I beg leave

to suggest that the time to be fixed upon for our meeting may be some day, most agreeable to their wishes, after the first of November next.

I am, gentlemen, as you all know, no candidate for public honors or office. My object in waiting upon you will be to offer my sincere thanks to my fellow-citizens of this, the State of my nativity, for all the confidence and kindness they have so uniformly extended to me on every occasion during a long public life. At different periods I have held most of the public places of trust and honor within their gift, and now I shall be most happy to evince my gratitude, not in thanks for future favors, but for those which, by their partiality and friendship, have been profusely bestowed upon me. The very flattering terms in which you have spoken of my public services are gratefully appreciated, and I desire now to express my acknowledgments to those who have deputed you to honor me with such an invitation, and to you, gentlemen, for whom individually I have long cherished sentiments of the highest personal regard.

I have the honor to be,

Very sincerely,

Your friend and fellow-citizen,

JOHN M. CLAYTON.

Messrs. John Wales, Enoch Roberts, John A. Duncan, George Richardson, Henry G. Banning, John Connell, J. G. Barstow, William K. McClees, John R. Latimer, Henry Garrett, Joseph M. Barr, &c.,
Committee of Invitation.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENT.

THOMAS M. RODNEY,
Doctor J. G. BARSTOW,
JOHN A. ALLDERDICE,
HENRY R. BRINGHURST,
LEONARD E. WALES,
E. C. STOTSENBURG,
ALEXIS DUPONT,
HENRY GARRETT.
R. M. CANBY,
E. JEFFERIES,
WILLIAM K. McCLEES,
Z. B. GLAZIER,

TREASURER,
P. SHEWELL JOHNSON.

SECRETARY,
HENRY R. BRINGHURST.

COPY OF THE LETTER OF INVITATION, SENT BY THE COMMITTEE TO THE INVITED GUESTS.

WILMINGTON, DEL., NOVEMBER 5, 1850.

DEAR SIR :

Our distinguished fellow-citizen, Hon. JOHN M. CLAYTON, having accepted an invitation to meet his friends at a public dinner, in this place, on Saturday, the 16th instant, we shall be most happy to have you with us on that day, to partake of the festivities of the occasion.

Mr. CLAYTON's eminent and patriotic services in our National Councils, his faithful attachment to and eloquent advocacy of the principles of the great Whig party of the Union, have called forth this public manifestation of their regard and gratitude on the part of his political friends in Delaware.

It will be gratifying to your fellow-whigs of this State to meet you at the festive board, to unite with them in the reception of our chief guest, and we trust that you will find it convenient to honor us with your presence.

We have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

JOHN WALES,

JOHN R. LATIMER,

JOHN CONNELL,

Committee of Invitation.

OFFICERS OF THE DAY.



PRESIDENT :

CHARLES J. DUPONT.

VICE PRESIDENTS :

Hon. JOHN WALES,
EVAN C. STOTSENBURG,
PHILIP REYBOLD,
JOHN R. LATIMER,
Dr. R. McCABE,
JAMES BUCKMASTER,
JOHN CONNELL.

[From the "North American."]

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER
TO THE
HON. JOHN M. CLAYTON.

The complimentary dinner given by his political friends in Delaware, to the Hon. JOHN M. CLAYTON, took place, according to appointment, on Saturday, 16th instant, at Wilmington. The Committee of Arrangement had secured the Odd Fellows' Hall in that city for the occasion; and every thing was done that taste and liberality could do to render the festival in all respects worthy of those who gave it, as well as of the distinguished citizen it was designed to honor. The spacious saloon was occupied by four ample tables, extending its entire length, each of which fairly groaned beneath the weight of a most sumptuous entertainment provided by Messrs. Miller and Sharpe. Every variety of dish that could tempt the palate, from the more substantial edibles to the most delicate and dainty viands, were spread profusely but with the most elegant order, along the festive boards, and presented to the eye a *toute ensemble* that elicited universal admiration, and reflected credit on those to whom this part of the arrangements had been committed. The north end of the hall was gorgeously dressed with the striped and starry folds of the American flag, over which was placed, in large letters, "The Union;" in the centre of the south side of the room, the national colors were hung, having on one hand, the inscription "Delaware—the first to adopt and the last to abandon the Constitution," and on the other, "Delaware's Favorite Son—John M. Clayton." Beneath, there extended a balcony, beautifully decorated with white and pink drapery, occupied by the Philadelphia Brass Band, and over the whole scene, the light from two magnificent chandeliers shed a genial and radiant splendor. About half-

past four o'clock, P. M., the company having entered the saloon, Mr. CLAYTON was announced, and as, amid the inspiring strains of the music, he passed down to a chair next Mr. CHARLES J. DUPONT, the President on the occasion, all present rose to receive him, and when he had taken his seat, expressed their feelings in three hearty cheers.—The dinner being over and the tables cleared, the President announced the regular toasts as follows—

1. The President of the United States. *President's March.*

2. The memory of that pure patriot and enlightened statesman, Zachary Taylor, whose loss a nation mourns, and whose name and fame will endure, when brass and marble shall have decayed. *Dirge.*

3. Our distinguished guest, the Hon. John M. Clayton, Delaware's favorite son, who has won for himself in the Senate and in the Cabinet, unfading honor and imperishable renown. *Auld Lang Syne.*

In offering this toast, which was received with six hearty cheers, the President said that he had been styled by his political opponents "the old stager." True it was that he had long identified himself with the glorious Whig party, and by his devotion to its principles, and his earnest, unremitted efforts in their behalf, entitled himself, perhaps, to the name by which his adversaries had distinguished him. He had, however, in all his past connection with politics, received but little, and desired but little from his party. The motives which had actuated him in selecting his political faith and in contributing his means and energies to promote the success of the great measures of policy which that faith inculcated as the most conducive to the public welfare, were an honest, disinterested solicitude for the honor and good of the country, and a wish to save its priceless institutions from the dangerous spirit and practices of those who valued the government only as an instrument of power, and cherished its liberties only to the extent to which they might advance, by preserving them, the ends of personal profit or glory. He said it was enough for him that he had been honored by his friends with the office of presiding at the festivities intended to compliment Delaware's noblest son, and he should ever hold it as among the proudest recollections of his life.

Mr. Clayton then rose, and, after the tumultuous applause with which he was greeted had subsided, spoke as follows:—

I use language but tame and trite, my fellow citizens, when I say that I cannot find words adequate to express the feelings which overpower me at this moment. I come before you as a mere private individual, without office, without station, without power. No man within the sound of my voice or elsewhere, can expect, by rendering ho-

mage to or conferring praise upon me, to receive anything, so far as I know, now or hereafter. I am like one who has returned from a long voyage to a distant country. I have seen much—much of which I wish to speak to my old companions and friends. But I bring with me nothing but a grateful heart and an honest purpose. (Cheers.)

My fellow-citizens, my chief object in accepting your kind invitation to meet you this day, was to tender my thanks for the confidence and support which, through a long public life, whenever I have been in public station or a candidate for public office, has been constantly extended to me by the people of my native State. I announced before the election in Delaware that I was no candidate for any office. I postponed this meeting till after the election had taken place, to enable others fully to understand my purpose and position. I have filled so many of the most important offices in the gift of the people of Delaware, that I feel bound to make some public acknowledgment to those who have stood by me amidst all the storms of party violence which have swept over the country during the last quarter of a century. I am well aware that no services of mine could have cancelled or can repay, the debt of gratitude I owe them; yet I may be permitted, but I cannot do it without emotion, now to say, upon this occasion of meeting them after a long separation, with what sincere pleasure I take my old friends and fellow-citizens by the hand, and acknowledge the heartfelt obligations by which I am, and ever shall be, bound to them. (Applause.)

We have passed through another electioneering campaign, and, for the first time in a quarter of a century, the Whigs of Delaware have lost the power of the State, which has been transferred by a train of accidents, to our political opponents. For the period just named, the party to which we have been attached has held the legislative power of this State, without one single day of intermission within my recollection. That power has now gone to the party entertaining directly opposite opinions. But it has not gone to them, and they do not hold it, by the tenure by which we held it. (Great applause.) We held it by the will of a majority of the citizens of Delaware. (Yes, we did.) They do not now, hold it, nor, in my judgment, will they ever hold it, by the will of a majority of the citizens of Delaware. (No, never!) The Governor they have elected is the representative Governor of a minority in the State. The Representative to Congress, whom they have sent to legislate for us, is a minority representative, and does not, and, in my judgment, never will, represent, as the Whig Representatives have proudly done, the will of a majority of the free-men of the State. (Applause.) The Whigs alone can elect men that represent a majority of the people of Delaware. No other party exists here that is able to do that thing but the Whig party. Look at the recent canvass. Hundreds upon hundreds of our friends, calling

themselves Temperance men, have chosen to strike down the party to which they had adhered for twenty years. That is a subject for them to reflect upon ; not a subject upon which I now choose to speak. And I only advert to the fact that we have been stricken down, as it were, in the house of our friends, for the purpose of saying that the Whig party has not been conquered by its old political enemies, but is as strong, if not stronger, than it has been for the past ten years : and that if those who entertain the same sentiments that we entertain upon the great national questions which divide the two great parties of the country, had voted according to their own principles and their own professions, we should have been in a majority as triumphant as the Whigs of Delaware ever were from their origin. (Great applause.)

Fellow-citizens, I did not come here to discuss matters of local interest. I have deviated thus far from my purpose, impelled by the strong feelings of the moment.

I have witnessed too much of party strife to desire unnecessarily to mix any of the ingredients of that bitter cup with the entertainments of this day. Yet I feel that it is my duty, and I know that it is expected of me, that I should say a few words in relation to some of the stirring events which have agitated the country during the last two years, and still continue to excite it.

The advent of General Taylor to power constituted a new era in the history of the Republic. He came into office by the suffrages of the people ; yet he presented the first instance of a President, so elected, with a practical majority in both branches of the National Legislature opposed not only to him, but to the principles which secured his election. The organization of both houses of Congress was against him, before he had any opportunity to develop the measures of policy upon which he intended to administer the government. Not a single committee was left in either branch which was not appointed upon party principles, in opposition to those who elevated him to office.— He was, therefore, instantly surrounded by unparalleled embarrassments and difficulties, presenting a new and untried occasion to test the strength and success of our republican system.

After twenty years of virtual disfranchisement and proscription, the great body of the friends who had sustained him looked to the return of a state of things which should present them, at least, upon an equal footing with their political opponents ; and, while among a hundred applicants for office, one only could obtain it, the impatience of such as were disappointed was too often sure to be succeeded by resentment that their claims were not preferred. Such did not require the promptings of others to induce them to swell the ranks of the opposition, both in and out of Congress. Superadded to these difficulties was the peculiar state of public affairs arising out of the recent annexation of the

vast territories ceded by the treaty of Mexico — difficulties which threatened the peace of the country, and appalled the stoutest hearts during the continuance of that administration which had waged the war and incurred the enormous expense of the acquisition.

During the session of Congress which preceded the Presidential election of 1848, the exertions of the then existing administration were directed in vain to the removal of the difficulties to which I have referred. That administration had effectually roused the demon of discord, but proved utterly impotent to lay it. Yet, in my judgment, many of the recommendations of President Polk in his last annual message to Congress were eminently wise, patriotic and just, especially those which suggested the admission of the new territories as States, left to form their own domestic institutions without control, and without any Congressional restriction in regard to the subject of slavery.

Before I proceed further with the history of these events, permit me to recall to your recollection the course which I myself pursued, while representing you in the public councils, in reference to this subject.

During the session of 1847-8, a violent debate sprung up in the Senate of the United States, which was conducted with unusual acrimony, in regard to the rights of the citizens of the Southern States to carry their slaves into the new territories. On the part of the North, it was affirmed that the territories were "free soil" by the Mexican laws, which, it was maintained, still continued to exist, and would remain in force until abrogated either by the power of Congress or the erection of State governments within the territories. On the part of the South, it was contended that the right to enjoy slave property within these limits was a necessary consequence of the acquisition obtained by the common blood and treasure. These clashing opinions were urged with consummate ability on both sides, and especially in the Senate, of which I was at that time a member. Threats of disunion often rang through the halls of both branches of Congress, arising out of this conflict of opinion. I did not participate in that debate, but exerted myself to hold a position midway between the contending parties, like the State I represented, and to seize the first occasion upon which I could move effectively to allay the agitation, and, if possible, to settle the controversy. I did not design to buy peace or to add new elements of discord by the introduction of other topics unconnected with the immediate question before me; and I thought then, as I believe now, that the constitution itself presented the natural and proper mode to terminate the strife and maintain the integrity of the Union. (Applause.) While the storm of discord was at the highest, I proposed to both the contending parties to settle the question by obeying the mandates of the Constitution in the organization of new territorial governments, over Cali-

fornia and New Mexico without the Wilmot proviso, but with a positive provision to bring the subject of the right to hold slaves under its laws, as they existed, before the Supreme Court of the United States, the tribunal appointed by the fathers of the republic to decide between the contending members of the confederacy.— (Applause.) This proposition was met in the most cordial spirit, and approved, with a few exceptions, by the great body of Southern members of Congress in both branches; and, after a protracted and exciting debate, a bill to that effect, reported by a committee of which I was the chairman, passed the Senate of the United States by a majority of two-thirds of all its members. During its passage through that body, a fierce opposition was excited against it in some of the Northern States, where political purposes could best be subserved by the continued agitation of the question of slavery. Mr. Van Buren became the leader of a new party organized upon the principle of opposition to this or any other plan of adjustment without the Wilmot Proviso; and for this measure of peace, which, I shall die in the belief, was better calculated to compose the distraction and divisions of the country than any which has ever yet been offered, I was met in the North by the fiercest spirit of denunciation. It was immediately announced that fifty thousand men had assembled in the Park in New York, to express their opposition and to utter their execrations against what they were pleased to call “the Clayton Compromise.” The friends who stood by me in the North in my anxious efforts to restore peace and harmony to the country, were denounced as having been sold to the South; and amidst the din and clamor of these party combatants, reason and argument were either unheard or lost their proper influence. In this state of things, the bill having passed the Senate, after weeks of discussion and one protracted session of twenty-two hours, during which Mr. Dix, of New York, and Mr. Niles, of Connecticut, both members of the new Free Soil school, distinguished themselves, in opposition to the measure, not less by their ability than by their unmeasured zeal, it was presented to the House of Representatives for concurrence; and there, without one word of debate, without a single reference to a committee, without, as I am bound to believe, any proper knowledge or appreciation of its true character, it was immediately strangled by a motion to lay it on the table, by a majority, (I think) of four votes out of more than two hundred.— This measure, which met the hearty co-operation and concurrence of the distinguished statesman of South Carolina, John C. Calhoun, now no more, and received the votes not only of both the Senators, but of all the Representatives of that State, satisfied and secured at the same time the acquiescence and the adhesion of, the south generally. The defeat of the measure was considered as indicating, on the part of the North, a determination to refuse to abide by the decision of

the common arbiter, appointed by the constitution itself to settle the question. I deeply regreted it at the time, and have not ceased to deplore it. That defeat added fuel to the flame already existing in the South; and I, with others, conscious of that fact, immediately looked with anxiety for some other measure of pacification, which, like that I had proposed, would not compromise the principles or outrage the feelings of either section of the confederacy. (Great applause.)

There seemed to be but one measure left which could effectually secure the same object; and when Mr. Polk's message at the commencement of the next session of Congress, suggested, in terms not to be mistaken, that Congress might safely leave the question undisturbed until the people of California and New Mexico should apply for admission as sovereign States of this Union, there seemed to be a general wish during the session of 1848-9, that the people within those limits, in the free exercise of their right of self-government, should, upon the admission of these new States, settle this and all other questions of domestic policy to suit themselves. Bills to admit the States were introduced into both branches of Congress; and the prospect of pacification and adjustment brightened as it became known that the President elect favored the same policy. Mr. Calhoun, the acknowledged leader of the Southern section, had proclaimed the right of self-government in the people of these territories, in his celebrated resolutions of 1847, in the following terms:

“Resolved, That it is a fundamental principle in our political creed, that a people, in forming a constitution, have the unconditional right to form and adopt the government which they may think best calculated to secure their liberty, prosperity, and happiness; and in conformity thereto, no other condition is imposed by the Federal Constitution on a State, in order to be admitted into this Union, except that its constitution shall be ‘republican;’ and that the imposition of any other by Congress, would not only be in violation of the Constitution, but in direct conflict with the principle on which our political system rests.”

Mr. Polk, in his message of December 5, 1848, inculcated the same doctrines. “The question,” said he, “is believed to be rather abstract than practical, whether slavery ever can or would exist in any portion of the acquired territory even if it were left to the option of the slaveholding States themselves. From the nature of the climate and productions, in much the larger proportion of it it is certain that it could never exist.” And again, he says: “In organizing governments over these territories, no duty imposed on Congress by the constitution requires that they should legislate on the subject of slavery, while their power to do so is not only seriously questioned, but denied by many of the soundest expounders of that instrument.

Whether Congress shall legislate or not, the people of the acquired Territories, when assembled in convention to form State constitutions, will possess the sole and exclusive power to determine for themselves whether slavery shall or shall not exist within their limits. *If Congress shall abstain from interfering with the question*, the people of these territories will be left free to adjust it as they may think proper *when they apply for admission as States into the Union*. No enactment of Congress would restrain the people of any of the sovereign States of the Union, old or new, north or south, slaveholding or non-slaveholding, from determining the character of their own domestic institutions as they may deem wise and proper. Any and all of such States possess this right, and Congress cannot deprive them of it. The people of Georgia might, if they chose, so alter their constitution as to abolish slavery within its limits; and the people of Vermont might so alter their constitution as to admit slavery within its limits. Both States would possess the right; though, as all know, it is not probable that either would exert it. It is fortunate for the peace and harmony of the Union that *this question is in its nature temporary, and can only continue for the brief period which will intervene before California and New Mexico may be admitted as States into the Union*. From the tide of population now flowing into them, it is highly probable that *this will soon occur*." He afterwards adds that, "if Congress, instead of observing the course of non-interference, *leaving the adoption of their own domestic institutions to the people who may inhabit these Territories*; or if, instead of extending the Missouri compromise line to the Pacific, shall prefer to submit the legal and constitutional questions which may arise to the decision of the judicial tribunals, *as was proposed in a bill which passed the Senate at your last session*, an adjustment may be effected in this mode. If the whole subject be referred to the Judiciary, all parts of the Union *would cheerfully acquiesce in the final decision of the tribunal created by the Constitution for the settlement of all questions which may arise under the Constitution, treaties and laws of the United States*."

Of the soundness of the opinions here expressed, I never entertained a doubt. These were justly regarded, during the whole session which preceded the close of Mr. Polk's administration and the inauguration of General Taylor, as the leading doctrines not only of southern statesmen, but also of the democratic party. Not only was the Cabinet of President Polk committed to these doctrines, but his party in Congress espoused the same principles; and these principles gained strength during the whole of that session, to such an extent that good men throughout the country regarded them as the ark of their political safety from the threatening evils arising out of our territorial acquisitions. The House of Representatives contained a small majority, as we have seen, in opposition to the last measure recommended by President Polk, which was the bill I had introduced at the previous ses-

sion; and, as many who had opposed that bill avowed themselves friendly to the measure recommended by him, of awaiting the action of the people in the formation of State governments both in California and New Mexico, I acquiesced in the general sentiment which favored that course of policy, because it would as effectually settle the whole controversy when the States should be admitted, as the bill I had proposed for submitting the question to the judicial tribunals; and I was desirous to avoid the opposition of such as having once voted against the bill of peace I had proposed, from the mere pride of political consistency, would probably persevere in doing so. I thought then and think yet that that bill presented by far the most eligible mode of deciding the question that could be suggested. With President Polk, I did not doubt that "all parts of the Union would cheerfully acquiesce in the final decision of the tribunal created by the Constitution for the settlement of all questions arising under the Constitution, treaties, and laws of the United States." Upon the formation of territorial governments, judicial tribunals were necessarily to be established; and the Constitution commanded us, in the erection of such tribunals, to make the necessary regulations for giving to the Supreme Court its appellate jurisdiction. This provision in the bill was, therefore, a measure, in my view, imperatively demanded of Congress, should territorial governments be established. But no such measure was necessary, in case it should be determined that Congress should not interfere, in the language of President Polk, "for the brief period which would intervene before California and New Mexico would be admitted as States into the Union"—events which, he declared, "it was highly probable would soon occur." Influenced by these considerations, my own sentiments on this subject were, thus far, entirely in coincidence with those of southern statesmen and of the leading men of the democratic party itself.

It was at this stage of the progress of this agitation that I was honored by President Taylor with a place in his Cabinet. (Loud and long continued cheering.) Coming into power with a substantial majority against him in both Houses, his great aim and end being the harmony and happiness of the country, he naturally, and as I thought wisely, concluded that it would best conduce to the successful adjustment of these questions, to carry out the policy suggested by his predecessor, and sustained, as I have stated, by the very party which had opposed his own election. He sought to make no party issue out of the controversy, but deeply deprecated the geographical divisions which would necessarily arise out of such an issue. Upon the organization of the first Congress after his inauguration, he recommended it to await the action of the people in the formation of State governments in the new territories, and expressed the same opinion, with his predecessor, that these events would probably soon occur. It was apparent that by this means the vexed question as to the power and duty of Congress to interdict slavery within these territories would be

avoided, without doing violence to the feelings or prejudices of either section of the country; and when his California message was sent to the House of Representatives, recommending this course of policy, the opposition press of the country burst forth in one general outcry that he had but adopted the resolutions and principles of the democratic party, and copied the recommendation of President Polk. (Laughter.) The complaint was that he had proposed nothing new; and while a studied effort was made to heap praises on those who, as it was alleged, had originated these suggestions, he was denounced in unmeasured terms for his 'imbecility' in merely following in the footsteps of others. Their censure under such circumstances was the highest encomium that could have been bestowed upon him. (Great applause.)

It is well known to many of you, my fellow-citizens, that I was opposed to the acquisition of these territories. I never voted for such an acquisition. The Legislature of this State had instructed me to vote against the annexation of any new territory, without a prohibition of slavery within its limits. I obeyed these instructions; and, in pursuance of them, I voted for the restriction, when the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was before the Senate. It is known to most of you that, in common with many others with whom I was accustomed to act, I predicted the evils which have since fallen upon the country in consequence of the purchase of California and New Mexico. But, when that territory had been acquired, I felt bound, as a friend of the Union, to promote its harmony by any and every measure which would prevent the alienation of one portion of the country from the other, or the organization of geographical parties within it. I did not believe, and do not now believe, that there was any danger of disunion from the adoption of the measures proposed by Presidents Polk and Taylor. (Applause.) I read the speeches of gentlemen of great distinction, who painted in vivid colors the horrors of disunion, and predicted, in melancholy jeremiads, the total subversion of our whole confederated system, in the event of the admission of New Mexico and California as States of this Union. (Laughter.) The flights of oratory on these topics were interesting exhibitions of genius. The pathos and effect with which the dissolution of the confederacy and the consequences of civil war were depicted in Congress made deep impressions on the country, and, in common with others, I confess that I admired

"How cunningly the blood and tears were drawn."

(Great laughter.) But I never seriously believed a syllable of the story that there was danger of dissolution of this glorious Union arising out of waiting for the action of the people of the territories in the creation of their own domestic institutions, or of acknowledging their right of self-government, by the admission of the States into this Union. I would not turn on my heel to pluck a feather from

the plume of any of those distinguished orators who, under the belief that such means were necessary to save the Union, kept Congress and the whole country in a state of continued agitation for about ten months, and who, having raised the ghost of disunion, afterwards obtained the credit of laying it. (Laughter.) My faith in the perpetuity of our glorious Republic rests on a somewhat better foundation than theirs. I believe it was not at any moment in the power of any of them—no, not of all the members of both Houses combined—to dissolve this Union. I firmly believe that the first serious palpable and tangible overt act of treason would have been succeeded by the degradation and downfall of the traitors. (Great applause.)

The blessings flowing from this Union are too deeply seated in the hearts of the American people for them to suffer any number of demagogues, whether in or out of Congress, to snatch from them this priceless inheritance. I have lived too long in public life, and seen too much of public men and their policy, to mistake the ravings of a few madmen, in either section of the Union, for the decisions of whole communities resolutely bent on their own or their country's ruin. I smile at the struggles of the politician who seeks to attain party ascendancy for himself or his friends by endeavoring to float higher up than any others upon the waves of sectional excitement. There is no danger in these demonstrations, so long as the great American heart—the heart of the people (I do not mean of Congress)—remains sound. (Great applause.) I can laugh at the effort of the political fanatic or madman who strives to make it appear to either section of the Union that he is a better friend to it than any body else, and, to gain distinction, "outherods Herod and overdoes Termagant." (Laughter.) There is generally, I say, no danger in all this to any but those who preach and attempt to practice absolute treason and disunion, and, indeed, there is generally very little danger even to them. It is "a valiant flea that eats his breakfast on the lip of a lion;" but he is in no peril, while his depredations remain too insignificant to attract notice. (Laughter.)

The orations made to show that disunion would be the consequence of granting the right of self-government to the people of the Territories were fine. The praises of the Euphuist in the Monastery were well merited. "Marvellous fine words," said dame Gendenning, "marvellous fine words, neighbor Hopper, are they not?"

"Brave words—very brave words—very exceeding pyet words," answered the miller; "nevertheless, to speak my mind, a lippy of bran were worth a bushel o'them." (Great laughter.)

The greatest embarrassment both to the President and to the country—the principal obstruction to all legislative measures—arose out of the futile effort made during the last session of Congress to embody in one bill, on this subject, measures absolutely incongruous, or having no proper connexion with each other. When the State of California presented herself for admission into the Union, and the President

had distinctly placed that measure as the very corner stone of his whole system of policy in regard to the new territories, there did not exist in either branch of Congress a sufficient number of opposing votes to prevent the passage of the necessary bill. But those who took the lead in the recent measures of adjustment having resolved that no man should vote for the admission of California who would not agree to vote at the same time ten millions to Texas for a release of her claim to a portion of New Mexico, as well as territorial governments for the latter and for Utah, the difficulties which before had surrounded the question, immediately thickened and spread a deeper darkness around us. A majority of either House might have been had at any time for either of the measures embraced in the bill separately; but the majorities for each of these measures would have been composed of very different individuals. More than fifty Northern members of Congress were willing to do justice to the measure proposed by President Taylor for the admission of California, who were unwilling to vote the money for the Texas boundary, or the clauses for the organization of the territories without the anti-slavery proviso. On the other hand, many Southern members of Congress were willing to vote for one or both of the two last measures, who were unwilling to vote for the first. Disposed as I was, nay, even anxious, that any measures approximating to a settlement of the questions before us should be adopted—sincerely desirous as I was to get rid of the noise of the alarmists and agitators in Congress who were daily making more hue and cry on these topics than all the rest of the country together, lashing themselves into fury, frightening the timid at home, and creating apprehensions among all the friends of rational freedom abroad—I would have been at any time truly rejoiced to find the doorway for legislation on other subjects (all of which had been completely occluded by the introduction of what was called the “omnibus bill”) again opened, the country quieted, and the agitators silenced. This omnibus bill hung in the doorway more than six months, while those who attempted to drive it through, finding its passage obstructed from its own unwieldy composition, shouted at the top of their lungs to alarm the community. Still it hung in the entrance, jammed on both sides, and for a long period it could be neither got in nor out. (Laughter.) An excuse became necessary for its probable failure; and instantly the President was attacked because he had not recommended it. It was forthwith resolved that he should bear the blame of its defeat. A new coalition, which had been formed to push it through by main strength in opposition to the real wishes Congress, began to denounce not only the President, but the members of his Cabinet, because *it would not go*. (Laughter.) A meeting was called in this city, to express public opinion in its favor. Another meeting naturally followed in opposition to it, at which resolutions were adopted complimentary to the administration, and particularly so to some of its members. It is needless for me to say to

you that I did not prompt either of the meetings, and knew nothing of the proceedings of either, until they were published. Yet when the proceedings of the latter were laid before the Senate of the United States, a charge was distinctly made that I was the author of the resolutions; and when that charge was denied by one of your Senators—my esteemed friend, Mr. Wales, now present—a charge which you all know to be utterly and absolutely untrue, it was persisted in, and I believe never retracted. (Cheers and sensation.) All this was but a part of a general plan to lay the failure of the omnibus on President Taylor and his administration. But Providence seems to have determined that this scheme should fail and be exposed. In the midst of all the clamor about the perils of the Union, the President died, and a new administration came into power. Some weeks elapsed, during which the proposed compromise, instead of gaining, lost strength even in the Senate. In the House there was never a possible chance for its passage. It consisted of several heterogeneous details, each of which had been originated in some separate resolution or bill proposed at the previous session, or on some former occasion. To carry it through, it was amended in any and every way by which it could get another vote; and finally, though not at all in the shape in which it was originally introduced, the whole project, after distracting the country for so long a period, and effectually preventing the passage of any measure for the public good on any other subject, was voted down. This was long after the death of President Taylor and the dissolution of his cabinet, and when it was made palpable to the world that it was impossible *he* could be the cause of its defeat. The obstruction caused by this bill being once removed, the way was opened for the first effective motion towards the settlement of these questions which was promptly made by a distinguished Senator from Maryland—Mr. Pearce. He grappled at once with the principal difficulty attending the whole adjustment, the question of the Texas boundary. He took *that single measure by itself*, made a new boundary line, different from and more satisfactory than that proposed in the omnibus; and to him was eminently—far more than to any other—due the credit of its passage. (Applause.) He saw that this would lay the foundation for the success of the other necessary acts of legislation. Knowing that it was impossible to lift the enormous weight of all these incongruous measures at one time, in one mass, he separated them, and, as other men in ordinary life are accustomed to conquer difficulties, he resolved to take them in detail. He did me the honor to consult me on the subject of his bill before its introduction, and I did not hesitate to advise him to persevere in the course he proposed. The result was soon seen. The bill he introduced, unclogged by other measures, was passed in a few days without difficulty, and by a large majority; and I have never doubted that, if the same course had been pursued at the commence-

ment of the session, Congress and the nation would have been saved six months of unnecessary distraction and alarm. (Applause.)

Viewing all the measures in common with this subject at this time as they passed Congress, I am far from saying they were the best that could have been adopted. The settlement of the Texas boundary by the Judiciary or the Congress of the United States, as President Taylor recommended, would have been, in my judgment, more consistent with the honor and dignity of the government, and would have saved us from the effects of a precedent which will be invoked on some future occasion, when some State shall seek to take the law into her own hands, to induce the government to submit to imposition, under the pretext of buying peace. But an adjustment of the boundary by Congress or the Judiciary had become impracticable, in consequence of the encouragement held out to Texas to resist until she should be paid for her acquiescence. As to the territorial governments of New Mexico and Utah, I, of course, would be among the last to object to their organization on the principles of my own bill which passed the Senate two years before. These territorial bills provide substantially for the very measures I had myself proposed and strongly recommended; and, individually, I was perfectly content with the adoption of my own scheme of settlement, so far as these territories were concerned. I should have been satisfied with the admission of a State Government in New Mexico, as well as California, with a constitution settling the question of slavery according to the will of her own people. But I have not yet ceased to deplore, and I fear that I shall hereafter have much more reason to deplore, the failure of the bill I had proposed, on account of the dissatisfaction expressed in the South with the admission of the State of California.

So far as regards California, the adjustment of the vexed question by submitting it to the judicial tribunals would, as Mr. Polk affirmed, and as I now repeat, have terminated the controversy forever, without any of that dissatisfaction now raging in the South. It was impossible that any Southern State, and especially that South Carolina, could have continued the agitation, as it now exists, with the votes of Calhoun, Butler, Burt, Rhett, and all the distinguished men of the delegation of South Carolina, in favor of the bill, backed by the votes of Mason, Hunter, Davis, of Mississippi, Berrien, and every Southern Senator and Representative, except Messrs. Badger, Toombs, Stephens, and three or four others. The settlement of the question by this mode would have been final and conclusive; as it would have been satisfactory to all parties. Our people are a law-abiding people; and the whole proposition simply was that both parties should agree to go to law before the Supreme Court of the United States, and abide the result. Duty, honor and self-respect would have compelled all sections of the country to submit to the decision. No man feels himself disgraced by it, who is beaten in a law-suit on a sheer question of law, after a full and fair trial. The measure would have

saved the honor of both parties, in any event. Leading Southern statesmen, with whom I was associated in the Senate at the time, often said to me, during the progress of the bill through that body, that, let the decision go as it might, the honor of the South was saved by the tender to her of a fair trial before an impartial tribunal, and she would be satisfied. But when this bill was defeated in the House, the impression was immediately made upon the Southern mind that, as a fair trial had been refused, there was a deliberate intention on the other side to disregard Southern rights and trample them in the dust. Ever since the session of 1847, that feeling has rankled in the Southern bosom :

"Hæret lateri lethalis arundo."

And now the admission of California, with a constitution prohibiting slavery without the benefit of the trial demanded by the South, has produced an alienation from the rest of the confederacy, among some mistaken gentlemen in that region, which I pray God, in his mercy, may soon give way to the more generous impulses which properly belong to and grace the Southern character. (Applause.)

And now, my fellow-citizens, I have to say, that I have seen nothing in the measures adopted by Congress to which I have referred, which should excite any portion of this Union to resistance against the established authorities of the country ; and I think it is the duty of every good citizen, whether he does or does not think that other and better measures might have been substituted in their place, not only to submit to the laws which have been enacted, but to stand by and support the government, if necessary, to the full extent of his ability in carrying those laws into successful execution. (Applause.) That President Fillmore will do his whole duty in this respect I have not a shadow of doubt ; and I hope you are all willing to join with me in sustaining him in the discharge of that duty. (Applause and frequent cheers.) In his patriotism, and that of the members of his Cabinet, I have the utmost confidence. I have no reason to believe that either of them would have refused his aid, at any moment to the settlement of these vexed questions on the basis proposed by President Taylor. They have acquiesced in what appeared to them to be the only practicable scheme of adjusting these difficulties. They seek to sustain the Constitution and the laws of their country ; and I honor them for their purpose. While they stand by the Union I shall be with them and for them. If there be any one sentiment in my bosom more deeply seated and more deeply cherished than any and all others, it is that of love and veneration for the institutions which our fathers have left us, and for the country, the whole country, covered and protected by the American Constitution. (Great applause.) There will be no hope left for me or mine when this Union shall be broken up ; and should that melancholy period ever arrive, I shall be a wanderer without a home. I can take no part for one section against the other. (Applause.) To me the preservation

of this Union is a matter of interest above all others, and, if necessary, I shall be found true to those who sustain it to the last of my blood and my breath. (Long continued applause.)

It is well known to you that at one period serious calamities were threatened to the country, in consequence of the dissatisfaction entertained by our fellow-citizens on the Pacific because they had been denied by Congress the protection of the laws of the United States. Threats of separation began to be uttered by those who found themselves thus deserted; and to assure them of the paternal care of the government, and its intention to assist them in any suitable mode, a special messenger, Mr. King, of Georgia, was despatched to California. He knew and communicated to them the wishes of the President for their happiness and welfare, and his desire that they should enjoy the protection of the United States and the benefits of a government of their own choice. This mission, which, we know, was attended with highly beneficial results, in allaying the discontent then growing in that territory, was soon made, by unscrupulous politicians, the theme of obloquy and reproach. The President and his Cabinet were charged, without one shadow of truth to justify the accusation, with having instigated the Californians to exclude slavery in the formation of their State constitution. The falsehood and contemptible malignity of all the calumnies on this subject have recently been put to rest for ever by the publication of a correspondence between Mr. King and the naval and military commanders on the California station. These calumnies, like a hundred others of similar character, served the purposes of the hour when they originated, and will soon sink into merited oblivion. (Applause.)

Next in magnitude to the question of slavery, among the causes of embarrassment which surrounded the administration of General Taylor was one to which I have already briefly adverted, arising out of appointments to office. He was charged by the opposition press with proscription of his opponents; and many of the disappointed office seekers of his own party, of course, joined in the clamor against him. It will be found, upon an examination of the facts, that, during the whole period of his administration, he did not remove a sufficient number to give his own friends an equal share of the offices of the government; and as to the propriety of the nominations to office made by him, one single fact is sufficient to put at rest for ever the slanders of his enemies. Although he necessarily made more nominations to the Senate than any other President of the United States ever did in an equal period of time, yet fewer were rejected by that body than on any former occasion after a political revolution. (Applause.)

When Gen. Jackson came into office in 1829, he was sustained by a large party majority in the Senate. Twenty years after, when Gen. Taylor came into power, there was as large a party majority in the Senate opposed to him. Yet, more appointments were rejected by that

body in the session of 1829-30 than in that of 1849-50. It is a very easy thing to charge either proscription or improper partiality. Few are willing to admit that their own peculiar merits do not entitle them to preference; and the accusation of injustice is too often a tribute due from an unsuccessful applicant to his own wounded vanity. [At this point Mr. Wales interposed to say that among other difficulties connected with President Taylor's appointments, was the fact that, under an arbitrary rule of the Senate, their consideration had been deferred from time to time, until the session was almost entirely wasted.] Mr. Clayton then continued: Yes, my fellow-citizens, as your Senator has just informed you, appointments were kept before the Senate for months, even until near the close of the session. Every exertion was made that could possibly be made by enemies bitter and unrelenting. Accusations most vile and infamous were made against the gentlemen who were nominated. No means were left untried to get a Democratic Senate, already predisposed to condemn them if they could be condemned, to reject them. But the Senate of the United States, except in one or two instances, where injustice was done, true to their own dignity and honor, refused to prostrate the characters of the men who had been nominated by Gen. Taylor. (Applause.) And one of the greatest of these triumphs was obtained by a gentleman present here to-night, one of the sons of Delaware—William D. Lewis. (At the mention of Mr. Lewis's name, the whole company rose, gave him three enthusiastic cheers, and drank his health.)

Mr. Clayton resumed:—

Another difficulty, which presented itself at the outset of General Taylor's administration, consisted in the number of private claims against the government which ought to have been decided by the preceding administration, but were left as so many legacies of trouble to their successors. The decisions made by the appropriate heads of departments upon these claims, whether for or against the claimants, were, of course, seized upon as subjects of complaint. I decided in favor of one of these claims, after fully investigating all the facts myself, and after taking the precaution to ascertain the opinion of the Attorney General on the subject, which concurred with my own. Backed also by the opinion of the former Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Walker, and the Hon. Joseph R. Ingersoll, former Chairman of the Judiciary Committee in the House, as well as of several committees of both Houses, and following a long list of precedents in reference to the subject, I decided in favor of the claimants for a part of their demand, and rejected the other part. The columns of the party press were forthwith opened against the claim, which was as palpably just, to the extent to which I had allowed it, as any that ever existed.

This was the *De la Francia* claim. I was assailed with still greater ferocity for *disallowing* the tobacco claim of M. Porte. It soon became apparent that no decision could possibly be made by any head of department, whether for or against the government, which would

not become the topic of malignant censure. One of these old claims, which had been referred to a previous Secretary of the Treasury, came before my friend Mr. Meredith. He referred it to the proper law officer of the Government, the Attorney General, who, after a full review of the whole subject, decided the question in favor of the claimant. The justice of his decision would never have been impeached but for the unfortunate fact, as it turned out after the money had been paid, that the Secretary of War, Mr. Crawford, of Georgia, was interested in it; a circumstance which was entirely unknown to any other member of the Cabinet at the time of the decision. I did not know that there was such a claim in existence until many weeks after the money had been paid. I suppose the motive which induced the Secretary of War to conceal his interest in the claim was one of delicacy; but I have a perfect conviction, without entertaining a doubt of the justice of the demand, that, had the fact of his personal interest been known or mentioned at any Cabinet meeting before the payment of the money, no settlement of that claim would have been made while Mr. Crawford remained a member of the administration. (Applause.) His conduct in offering, as he did, to Congress to abide the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States upon the legality of the claim,—to waive every advantage of defence except that arising out of the law itself, and to return the money in the event of a decision against him by the Court, should have exempted him from that abuse which has been so profusely and unjustly lavished upon him.

Indeed, my fellow-citizens, so constantly was my own attention occupied with the proper duties of my own department, that very little time was left me to look after those of others. But I must in justice add, that, so far as my observation extended, the business of every other department, during the administration of General Taylor, was conducted, notwithstanding the unexampled embarrassments which surrounded him and them, with a degree of energy, and industry, and integrity which has never been surpassed. (Applause.) This tribute is justly due from me to my associates in that Cabinet, whose kindness and courtesy to me, on all occasions, deserve my warmest acknowledgements. There has never existed an administration in this government in which there was greater harmony and concert of action. In the gentlemen who composed it the President entertained unbounded confidence, and they retained that confidence to the last moment of his life. (Applause.) Falsehood and calumny, directed against them, as it was, from so many quarters, failed to make any impression on his mind; and he adhered to them with a tenacity which was increased by his perfect knowledge of the injustice with which they were assailed. Coinciding in sentiment with him on all important subjects, his wish was their law; and when he heard so often the pitiful aspersion that his Cabinet ruled him, knowing, as he did, how faithfully they carried out his own will, while they were often made to bear the whole re-

sponsibility of his decisions and actions, he scorned the attempts to alienate him from those whom he had selected as his advisers. It would be difficult for any man to know, standing outside of that Cabinet, the extent of the injustice done to its respective members by the device, which was as cunningly conceived as it was industriously propagated, that the appointments, and even the actions, of the Executive Government was dictated by his Cabinet, and not by the President himself. (Laughter.) I have repeatedly known a Cabinet minister abused for months by the whole opposition press of the country on account of an appointment which he had never suggested or recommended, but which had been ordered by the President alone. The unsuccessful applicant for office often found a balm for his wounded feelings in the belief, which he chose fondly to cherish, that he was the victim of some Secretary, though he was a favorite of the President. (Laughter.) These and similar slanders on the members of the administration were suffered too generally to pass without contradiction. They were too laboriously engaged in the discharge of their respective duties to take upon themselves the task of refuting the thousand falsehoods which either party or personal malice was constantly hatching against them; conscious that, when the passions and prejudices of the hour should have passed away, justice would be done to them for the fidelity and untiring zeal with which they discharged their duties amidst greater obstacles than had ever obstructed the course of any previous administration. (Applause.)

The foreign policy of President Taylor was marked by an adherence to the principles inculcated in the farewell address of the father of his country. He sought no wars of aggrandizement or conquest. Peace and commerce with foreign nations, on fair and honorable terms, were the objects he aimed at. He regarded war, with the horrors and dangers of which no man was more intimately acquainted, as a measure never to be resorted to until every effort of honorable diplomacy should be exhausted. In the front of his whole system of policy in this respect, he manifested a scrupulous anxiety to maintain our neutral obligations and the faith of treaties; and his principles were fully illustrated in the course he pursued towards Denmark and Spain.

On the other hand, no man was more sensitive on points of national honor; and the promptitude and energy with which he demanded and recovered the foreigner who, after having sought an asylum on our shores, was kidnapped and carried to Havana, at the very moment when he was maintaining in their true spirit our treaty stipulations with Spain by the suppression of the Cuban expedition, was an evidence of that stern determination, which never abandoned him, to maintain, under all circumstances and at all hazards, the honor of his own country. (Great applause.) While abstaining from all interference with the domestic concerns of foreign nations and all entangling alliances, he did not withhold from such as maintained the republican system, or struggled to throw off the shackles of despotism,

the full and free expression of his own 'generous sympathies. (Applause.) For he was a republican not merely in name, but in heart. (Applause.) He rejoiced in the happiness of his fellow men throughout the world, and his bosom throbbed with hope for the success of every effort, made in either hemisphere, for the spread of those liberal principles upon which he profoundly believed their happiness depended. At the first dawn of the revolution in Hungary he was ready to recognise her independence, if she should be found able to maintain it, and at the very moment when an unprincipled press was engaged in denouncing him as most friendly to the despotic powers of Europe, he was directing a mission to evince the interest of this government in the noble effort of Hungary to become free. (Great applause.) When her unhappy people fell beneath the bayonets of the Czar, he still publicly and proudly avowed, in a message to Congress, the anxiety he had felt for their welfare. "Though," said he, Hungary has fallen, and her patriotic children are now in exile or in chains, I am still free to say that, had she succeeded in maintaining her independence, we should have been the first to welcome her into the family of nations." (Long and continued applause.) He directed our Minister at Constantinople to tender to the Sultan a free passage for the unfortunate Kossuth and his companions in captivity on board an American frigate, then lying in the Bosphorus, prepared to bring them to the American shore. He instituted the first mission to the Helvetic Republic. (Applause.) He thought the period had arrived when the strength of his own country and her high standing among the nations of the earth justified and demanded of her government to take a new position in reference to the affairs of foreign countries—not by assuming an attitude of hostility or by uttering threats of defiance to any, but by the manifestation of the strictest regard for the commercial and political rights of the American people as connected with those countries. No man ever sought more earnestly to prevent the interference of foreign governments in the affairs of the American continent. Yet he desired rather to prevent foreign aggressions upon the rights of the weak American republics by remonstrance in their behalf, than by threatening hostilities in their defence. (Applause.)

In the negotiation of the Central American treaty—to proclaim the ratification of which was the last official act of his life—he insisted on a clause, now to be found in that treaty, which denied to great Britain any right in future to colonise, fortify, or assume or exercise any dominion whatever, over any part of Central America or the Musquito Coast—a clause which expressly forbids to Great Britain the right to use any protectorate for the purpose of exercising dominion, and also forbids to her any right to assume dominion for the purpose of maintaining a protectorate. (Applause.) He himself desired to recognise the Nicaraguan title by the Nicaraguan treaty, but left the question, after sub-

mitting that treaty to the Senate, with an avowal of his willingness to ratify it, to be decided as the Senate should think proper. I left the Department of State before the Senate acted on the subject, and, of course, I have no knowledge of their decision. But I have seen within a few days past a statement purporting to embrace an official letter from Mr. Chatfield, the British Charge d'Affairs, to the Minister of Foreign Relations of Nicaragua, in which it is declared that the treaty negotiated between this Government and that of Great Britain, "expressly recognises the Mosquito Kingdom, as aside the rights which you [the Nicaraguan Minister] pretend Nicaragua has on the coast." If Mr. Chatfield ever wrote such a letter, which I confess I greatly doubt, he has been guilty of a perversion of the Treaty which no honorable government could defend for a moment, and which the British authorities, I am well satisfied, would disdain to adopt. (Applause!)

The objects aimed at by the President in that treaty were to obtain for our country a speedy passage to the Pacific, not only by a great ship canal, but by any and every other canal or railway across the Isthmus, which divides North from South America—to secure the perfect neutrality of the vast region embraced in that Isthmus—to save the expense of maintaining any naval or military power to protect these routes—to guard them against blockade in time of war—to bring into closer relations with us our possessions on the Pacific—and to dedicate the highways to the uses of all nations which might agree to extend to them the same protection which the United States and Great Britain had guaranteed. For various reasons it is not my purpose to discuss these subjects in detail, and I have only glanced at this one for the purpose of preventing any misconception in regard to one of the most important acts of General Taylor's administration.—(Applause.)

The multiplicity and extent of our foreign relations, which were constantly increasing in interest and importance, made the duties of the department over which it was my fortune to preside in the highest degree burthensome and laborious. Such was the pressure of public business, arising from this and other causes, that I was compelled to devote myself to it to the utter exclusion and consequent derangement of my private and personal affairs. I was, therefore, anxious, as soon as the state of the negotiations entrusted to my charge by the President would permit it, to retire again to private life. It was for this reason that, in June last, I tendered to the President, through the hands

of my personal friend, the Attorney General, my resignation, accompanied by a pressing request that he would permit me to retire and appoint my successor. He refused to accept the resignation; and when he informed me and my friend that my retirement would embarrass and distress him, I felt that, however necessary it had become for my private interest to withdraw, yet I could not leave him while such were his convictions. (Great applause, with cheering.) His influence with me was such that I should never have ventured again to press the subject upon him; and when he had declared his sentiments and wishes, I felt that I would as soon have run away from the battle of Buena Vista as to have deserted him. (Applause.) And now, remembering within how short a time after this interview his manly frame and noble heart were laid cold in the embraces of death, I rejoice that I yielded to his wishes at any sacrifice of ease, or health, or fortune. (Great applause.)

My fellow citizens, it will remain to me a subject of proud consolation that I enjoyed the perfect confidence and intimate friendship of this great and good man during the whole period of his administration; and that I labored with all the devotion of which I was capable to serve him faithfully as a member of his Cabinet. Knowing his qualities, as I did—and I think no man had a better opportunity of knowing them than I had—I believe I can speak of him as he was. I know that

“All the ends he aimed at were his country’s.”

(Applause.)

His moral, like his physical courage, was indomitable. No one ever approached the consideration of a great public question with more deliberation and caution; and when about to decide it, he “took each man’s censure, but reserved his judgment.”—When he had determined, no one was more firm, or could be more resolute in adhering to his purpose. He was one of the few men we meet with in this world who can *never* descend to a base, mean, or dishonorable action. (Applause.)

Though unpractised in the duties of civil administration before he entered the executive mansion, his strong and vigorous intellect, aided by a profound knowledge of human nature, for the acquisition of which no one ever enjoyed better opportunities, amply supplied the want of experience as a civilian; and the kindness and benevolence of his nature never failed to win the hearts of all who came within the circle of his intimate acquaintance. Surrounded by enemies, who daily sought to stab the

reputation he had earned by a long life of public service, his conscious rectitude enabled him to "smile at the drawn dagger and defy its point." (Applause.) This was his shelter amidst all the storms of political opposition; and the confidence of security from all dangers, resulting from this consolation, never deserted him even in his dying moments. When informed by his physician that his last hour was approaching, his simple remark indicated the feeling that had pervaded his bosom and sustained him through life: "I am not afraid to die," said the expiring patriot,—*"I have endeavored to do my duty."* (Great applause. Mr. Clayton was here so overcome by his emotions that he was compelled to pause.)

This was the feeling which bore him unappalled through the perils of battle. This upheld him through that long and dreary night of blood and fire, when he won the first brevet in the war of 1812, by his successful defence of Fort Harrison against more than fifty times his numbers. In Florida the scalping knife and tomahawk of the savage had no terrors for the soldier who felt that he had always endeavored to do his duty. Amidst the thunders of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, when he broke the Mexican power, and gave that confidence to his countrymen which insured their victory in all the subsequent contests—in the blood-stained streets of Monterey, and in that tempest of shot which was poured upon him and his little army on the proudest field of his fame at Buena Vista—at the very moment when his garments were torn by the bullets of the enemy—the *mens conscia recti* still rose serene, self-possessed, and triumphant through the terrors of that conflict. (Great applause.) He was snatched from his country before an opportunity had been allowed to develop his whole system of civil policy, and on the very eve of the execution of purposes, devised by him for the public good, the knowledge of which must now forever sleep with him in his grave. But he had done enough for fame; and while a sentiment of gratitude continues to throb in an American heart, his memory will be cherished as that of one of the few who were not born to die. (Loud and long continued cheering.)

The most cordial and earnest applause followed the conclusion of this great speech, which, throughout, elicited the warmest expressions of approbation, and made, evidently, a deep impression upon the auditory. It was felt to be a noble and powerful vindication of President Taylor's administration, and a just, as well as scathing rebuke of those, who, from various motives, and in divers ways, had exerted themselves to embarrass and defeat

its success. The regular toasts were proceeded with in their order, as follows:

4. The memory of Washington and that patriot band of sages and heroes who achieved our independence, and who laid the foundation of this great and mighty Empire. *Dead March.*

5. The sovereignty of the Constitution and Laws of the United States, over every other human power. *Hail Columbia.*

6. Our glorious Union—Palsied be the Brain, and withered the Arm that would dismember it.

Dr. Wm. P. Cunningham's Song for the Union.

The sixth toast being read, Mr. Clayton rose and proposed nine cheers, which were given with great cordiality.

7. Our Senators and Representatives in the present Congress—faithful sentinels upon the ramparts of the Constitution. Honor to whom honor is due. *Star Spangled Banner.*

This sentiment called up the Hon. John Wales, one of the Senators from Delaware, who said:

Mr. President and fellow citizens: As one referred to in the toast that has just been announced, I feel highly honored. I only regret that my colleagues are not here to express in their own language the grateful sentiments which I presume they would feel if they were among us to-night. I have been honored more than I deserve by the toast that has now been announced. If I have done my duty and secured the confidence of my fellow citizens in the course which I have pursued in the Senate, it is to me a gratification higher than any other I have ever enjoyed. (Applause.) I can say, upon reflection, with regard to my course in the Senate, that there is not a vote I have given, which I would now recal or wish in any way to change or to modify. And if, in any respect, I am entitled to your confidence, it is because, as a Whig, I have always stood, and ever intend to stand upon Whig ground. (Great applause.) Unseduced by flattery or promises, not drawn away from the great Whig Platform by collateral issues, I stand, as I always intend to stand, upon the great basis, the true basis of Whig principles, upon which the honor and happiness of this country depend.—And it is only by carrying out the principles and measures of the Whig party that you can ever expect to have happiness and prosperity in this country. (Applause.)

Let me for a moment advert to the position in which your Senators and Representative in Congress were placed. On entering upon the exercise of our duties, at the commencement of the session recently terminated, what was our condition? We

had a Patriot Chief as President, surrounded by a Cabinet distinguished for more eminence of talent, for more devotion to the true interests of the country, and for more skill and capacity to carry on the affairs of this government, than I believe has ever been witnessed before under any other President. (Great applause.) Those of you, gentlemen, who have not had the opportunity of personal observation, cannot estimate correctly the capacity, the talent, and the patriotism which was centered in our late lamented President and his Cabinet. Men more truly devoted to the great interests of the country; men who sacrificed more of private interest and private ease, never came into the administration of the government.

What was the condition of things when the present Congress assembled? Both the Senate and House contained a majority against the President and the measures which he recommended. How did a true American feel under these circumstances? When he saw that patriotic chief as President, surrounded by that Council, so brilliant in talent, he felt safe that no measure which should be passed would jeopardize the safety and prosperity of this country. That was our only safeguard; our only security. And, fellow citizens, if there is any thing to an American dearer than anything else in our Government, it is a consciousness of safety in the Executive of the country. (Great applause.)

The House of Representatives or the Senate may thwart measures necessary for the public good; but if you have a good President, supported by a capable Cabinet you are still safe. And, fellow citizens, you know not how much may be comprehended in that term "safety." What would have been the fate of this country, if the madness which reigned triumphant through Congress during the first months of its session, had not been checked? What was the state of things then? Why, there was so much of dissension in one branch that they could not organize for some time. In the Senate there was a decided majority against the Executive. His friends were left powerless as to the execution of measures, however wise and salutary they might be.

And now I venture to say to you, gentlemen, that from no administration which has ever existed under our constitution came state papers, recommendations of measures of public policy, wiser, more patriotic, and more conducive to the public good, than those which were laid before Congress by the late administration at the commencement of the last session.—Let their acts speak for themselves. And when those acts shall

all come before the public, I will challenge any administration to produce specimens of sounder statesmanship, of greater diplomatic skill, of greater devotion to the true interests of the country, than the late administration will present on the historic page. (Great applause.) Notwithstanding they were assailed by disappointed office seekers, whose name is legion; notwithstanding they were assailed by a violence of falsehood and abuse never before equalled in this country, or in any other, they stood firm; they carried on all the laborious duties of their offices with firmness; they breasted, with manly fortitude, the storm of calumny which was showered upon them. I did not hesitate to place the most unbounded confidence in such a President, in such an administration. (Loud and long continued cheering.) I continued to do so steadily to the last; and I am exceedingly happy that this course has met with your approbation.

Allow me to propose the following toast:

"The Whigs of the Union, whose political principles form the true basis of the prosperity and happiness of the country—let their rally cry be "in Union there is strength—united we stand, divided we fall."

Mr. Wales resumed his seat amid great cheering.

The regular toasts were then proceeded with in their order as follows:—

8. The Quadruple Alliance—The Plough, the Loom, the Ship and the Anvil, mutually sustaining and supporting each other.

Speed the Plough.

9. The Army and Navy of the United States—which have covered themselves with imperishable fame. *Star Spangled Banner.*

10. Our National Government—As much bound in duty to protect the labor of the country as to defend the country against the foreign foe.

Columbia the Gem of the Ocean.

11. The Democratic Telescope, through which the Dead Sea in Asia may be seen, *inside* the Constitution; and our own Rivers, Lakes and Harbors *outside* of it.

Sky high! and I, my stars!!

12. The sacred cause of human Rights and Human Liberty throughout the world.

Marseilles Hymn.

13. The Whigs of Delaware, beaten, but not dismayed—Disciplined by misfortune, the next contest will find them more firm and united; and victory will then perch upon their banner.

Rosin the Bow.

14. The Fair Sex—The education of Mothers the civilization of the world.
Here's a health to all good lussies.

A number of letters from many distinguished public men, who had been unable to attend the dinner, were then read by the President, among which were the following:

MARSHFIELD, Nov. 11, 1850.

Gentlemen—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th of this month.

Nothing can be more just and appropriate than the manifestation of regard and gratitude which political friends in Delaware propose to make to Mr. Clayton. His abilities, his long services in the public councils, and his able defence of the principles of the Whig party, well entitle him to this mark of distinction.

It would give me pleasure to be present at his reception by his friends, and to partake of the festivities of the occasion. But my long absence from my post, and the duties which the near approach of Congress calls on me to perform, oblige me to deny myself the gratification of accepting your invitation.

I pray you to tender my regards to your chief guest, and to all friends whom so agreeable an occasion may call together.

I am, gentlemen, very truly your friend and obedient servant,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

Messrs. Wales, Latimer and Connell.

By the Committee.—The Hon. Daniel Webster, whose fame will endure as long as the everlasting granite hills of his native State.—
 Drunk with nine cheers.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 12, 1850.

Gentlemen—I am much honored by your invitation to attend the public dinner to the Hon. John M. Clayton, on Saturday, the 16th instant. Few men have served the country with as much faithfulness and ability as himself. The State of Delaware, justly distinguished by her great men, takes a becoming pride in the late Secretary of State as one of the most gifted of her sons. A career of uncommon activity and usefulness, both in his native commonwealth and the counsels of the Union, has been suspended for a moment by a great public calamity, to be resumed, it may be hoped, speedily, and with unabated vigor and success. The space now left by his absence among statesmen in prominent positions, must be filled once more by one who has long shared in their toils and honors, and contributed his full measure to the illustration of principles and the support of measures, identified alike with the well being of the Republic.

Being unable, from previously formed engagements, to partake personally of your festivities, I can only offer my warmest wishes for the

brilliant success of the occasion, for the happiness of yourselves and your associates, and for the continued honors of your "chief guest."

Asking leave to offer the following sentiment, I am, with great respect, your faithful servant,

J. R. INGERSOLL.

Hon. John Wales, John R. Latimer, Esq., John Connell, Esq.

The tried Whig Statesmen of the Republic—faithful in their labors and illustrious in their actions. The country is entitled to their untiring devotion—and their services reflect honor and glory upon the country.

By the Committee.—The Hon. Joseph R. Ingersoll:—A patriot son of a patriot sire.

CHESTERTOWN, Nov. 11, 1850.

Gentlemen—I have received your letter of the 5th instant, inviting me to a public dinner, to be given in Wilmington on the 16th Novr., to your distinguished fellow-citizen, the Hon. John M. Clayton. That gentleman's eminent parliamentary and diplomatic ability are universally admitted, and his long and faithful attachment to the principles of the great Whig party of the Union fully entitles him to the public manifestation of the regard of his political friends. I should be very happy to be with you on the occasion, but engagements of a nature not to be neglected will deprive me of the pleasure.

With great respect, gentlemen, your obliged and obedient servant,

J. A. PEARCE.

Hon. J. Wales, J. R. Latimer, John Connell, Esq.

By the Committee—Senator Pearce, of Maryland, whose divining rod struck the line that gave peace and tranquility to the country.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 14, 1850.

Gentlemen—We feel very much honored by your invitation to the public dinner to be given to the Hon. John M. Clayton, at Wilmington, on the 16th instant. The eminent and patriotic services of that distinguished statesman in the National Councils, and his faithful attachment to, and eloquent advocacy of Whig principles, entitle him to the esteem and gratitude of the Whig party throughout the country. Most happy, therefore, would we be to unite with his political friends of Delaware, in the tribute of respect and regard which they are about to pay to him. But, gentlemen, our engagements at home, we regret to say, will deprive us of that pleasure. Begging you to accept our profound thanks for your kindness, and to convey to your distinguished guest our best wishes for his health and happiness, we remain

Your obliged friends and servants,

JO. GALES,

W. W. SEATON.

To the Hon. John Wales, John R. Latimer and John Connell.

By the Committee.—Messrs Gales & Seaton—Faithful and fearless expounders of the Constitution—an honor and a model to the profession they adorn.

PHILADA., 15th Nov., 1850.

Dear Sirs—I have delayed replying to your note inviting me to be present at the public dinner to be given to the Hon. John M. Clayton, in the hope of being able to gratify my own feelings by participating in the festivities intended as a mark of respect to that distinguished citizen, whom you justly characterise as eminent for his patriotic services in our National Councils, and his faithful attachment to, and eloquent advocacy of the principles of the great Whig party of the Union, and whose career has added even to the brilliancy of the State of Delaware, which has never yet failed to have some bright particular star in the galaxy of American statesmen. I regret extremely to find that my attendance on the occasion will be rendered impossible by a professional engagement here, which I cannot avoid. I offer you the following sentiment:

“The Sons of Delaware—The pride of one State and the admiration of all.”

I am, gentlemen, with great esteem and regard, very truly yours,

W. M. MEREDITH.

Hon. John Wales, J. R. Latimer and John Connell, Esqrs.

By the Committee.—Hon. Wm. M. Meredith, Pennsylvania's distinguished son:—integrity and patriotism are synonymous with his name.

MORRISTOWN, November 13th, 1850.

Gentlemen—I have had the honor to receive your kind invitation to meet the friends of your distinguished fellow-citizen, John M. Clayton, at a public dinner in Wilmington on the 16th inst.

It would afford me much pleasure to join the Whigs of Delaware in this manifestation of their regard for Mr. Clayton, and gratitude for his eminent and patriotic services to the country. By his diplomatic skill and liberal statesmanship, he has lately gained additional claims to respect and admiration, not only from his political friends, but also from the whole country and the age in which we live.

While a member of the late Cabinet of Gen. Taylor, he successfully maintained, under the most difficult circumstances, the honor and faith of the Government; strengthened the bonds of peace with the nations of the earth; and secured to the commerce of the world a great and common thoroughfare of trade, which will connect the two oceans that wash the eastern and western shores of our extensive and mighty Republic.

I sincerely regret that my engagements at home during the short

vacation of Congress, will prevent me from being with you on so agreeable an occasion.

With much respect, yours, &c.,

J. W. MILLER.

To the Hon. John Wales, John R. Latimer, John Connell.

By the Committee.—Senator Miller, of New Jersey:—An honor to that heroic State, whose soil, during our revolutionary war was long crimsoned with the blood, and whitened by the bones of its inhabitants.

BOSTON, Nov. 13th.

Gentlemen—I am greatly honored by your communication of the 5th inst.

It would give me true pleasure to meet the Whigs of Delaware at their approaching festival, and to unite with them in a public manifestation of their regard and gratitude for the patriotic services of their distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Clayton.

I regret that my engagements will not allow me to leave home in season for the occasion.

Believe me, gentlemen, very sincerely, your obliged and obedient servant,

ROBT. C. WINTHROP, Jr.

To Hon. John Wales, John R. Latimer and John Connell, Esqrs.

By the Committee.—The Honorable Robert C. Winthrop:—The dignified Speaker of the late House of Representatives of the United States—a patriotic descendant of a patriot race.

PROVIDENCE, Nov. 11, 1850.

Gentlemen—I am honored by your invitation to attend the Dinner to be given to the Hon. John M. Clayton, by his fellow citizens of Delaware, on the 16th inst.

My personal relations with that distinguished individual, and a just appreciation of his "eminent and patriotic services in our national councils," hardly allow me to forego the pleasures of joining in your festivities—or in anything to do him honor. But the near approach of the session of Congress, and a necessarily limited opportunity to attend to my private affairs, preclude the possibility of my attendance. Allow me to tender to your acceptance, this sentiment.

"John M. Clayton—The Patriot Statesman of Delaware.—His laurels were not won by the sword, nor are they appreciated by Delaware alone: his fame is identified with his country and its Union."

Accept my thanks for the courtesy you have been pleased to extend to me, and believe me cordially and faithfully,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN H. CLARKE.

To Messrs. John Wales, John R. Latimer and John Connell.

By the Committee.—Senator Clarke, of Rhode Island:—An honor to that gallant Whig State, and a credit to the public councils of the nation.

MONTPELIER, VT., Nov. 12th, 1850.

Gentlemen—Yours of the 5th instant, extending to me an invitation to be present at a public dinner to be given to the Hon. John M. Clayton, by his political friends, on the 16th of this month, at Wilmington, Delaware, has been received.

If I were in the enjoyment of usual health, nothing would be more gratifying to my feelings than to unite with the Whigs of Delaware in the reception of their distinguished guest. Mr. Clayton has, by his eminent services, both in the Senate and in the Cabinet, proved himself worthy of the highest honors his fellow-citizens can bestow upon him; and I am glad to learn that you are about to make a manifestation of your regard for, and your attachment to a public servant who has done so much to advance the prosperity, elevate the character, and increase the glory of his country. I thank you, gentlemen, for your kind invitation, and assure you that ill health alone prevented its acceptance.

I am, gentlemen, with the highest respect, your ob't. serv't.

WM. UPHAM.

Hon. John Wales, Hon. John R. Latimer, and Hon. John Connell.

By the Committee.—The Hon. William Upham, Senator from Vermont:—The enlightened representative of the "Bright Whig Star" that never sets.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 13, 1850.

Gentlemen—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor inviting me to be present at a public dinner, to be given on the 16th inst., by the Whigs of Delaware, as a just tribute of respect to their distinguished fellow-citizen the Hon. John M. Clayton.

It would afford me great satisfaction to unite with you in this manifestation of the respect due to the long and eminent political services of an able and distinguished public servant; and I regret that my official engagements growing out of the accumulation of business incident to the near approach of a session of Congress, compel me to decline your invitation.

I beg to assure you of my grateful appreciation of the kindness and regard which prompted your invitation.

I am, gentlemen, with great respect, very truly your obedient servant,
N. K. HALL.

Messrs. John Wales, John R. Latimer, and John Connell.

By the Committee.—The Hon. N. K. Hall, the able and efficient Post Master General:—Modest merit seldom goes unrewarded.

GEORGETOWN, NOV. 15, 1850.

Gentlemen—I have had the honor to receive, and extremely regret that it will not be in my power to accept, your polite invitation to the dinner to be given to Hon. John M. Clayton, in the city of Wilmington, on the 16th inst. Numerous private and professional engagements of a pressing nature, in anticipation of my speedy departure and absence from home for several months, will deprive me of that pleasure.

Did circumstances permit, I need not assure you, gentlemen, how happy I should be to unite with you in the well merited honor which you propose to pay to our distinguished friend and fellow-citizen on the occasion referred to, and to add the tribute of my personal presence to this public manifestation of regard and gratitude on the part of his political friends in this State, for his long and eminent services in the Councils of the country. For twenty years he has been identified with the fame and fortunes of the Whig party of this country, and during that period he has been known and recognised in every State of the Union, as one of the most able, eloquent and efficient advocates of its principles and policy, while in the distinguished and responsible post which he has more recently filled, he has achieved by his skilful, firm, and patriotic conduct of our foreign relations, a reputation for ability and success, both at home and abroad, which has never been surpassed by any of the enlightened statesmen who have occupied the same station since the foundation of the government. It was my good fortune, as well as pleasure, to enjoy much of his society during the short period he presided over the State Department; and if there was any thing more than another which, next to his admitted skill and ability, excited my especial admiration and respect for him in that high and responsible position, it was the intrepid and patriotic American spirit and feeling which actuated him in the discharge of all its difficult and arduous duties. His only ambition seemed to be, to use the last words of the lamented President under whom he served, to do his "duty"—to advance the true interests and permanent glory of this great Republic; and how well he succeeded in those noble objects is already amply attested by the enlightened judgment of impartial men without distinction of parties amongst us. The good faith,

honor, and dignity of the country were alike fearlessly asserted and scrupulously maintained by him in all its intercourse and relations with foreign governments—the greatest as well as the smallest; and he left the office after having conducted the Department through many difficulties and perils of no ordinary nature, without once incurring, from any respectable quarter, the imputation of having compromised either by timidity or bad management. This I am aware is high praise, but, making due allowance for personal feelings and private friendship, I am convinced that it is not more than the future history of his country and the world will award him.

I have the honor to be, with the highest respect, your ob't. serv't.

JOHN W. HOUSTON.

Hon. John Wales, John R. Latimer, Esq., John Connell, Esq.

By the Committee—The Hon. John W. Houston:—The sterling Whig, and approved Representative.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 15, 1850.

Gentlemen—I am honored with your invitation to join the friends of the Hon. John M. Clayton, at a public dinner to be given to that distinguished statesman, but a continued indisposition deprives me of the pleasure which your invitation proposed, and which until this morning I hoped to enjoy.

The discriminating voice of Delaware has, from the adoption of the Constitution, called to the National Councils men whose talents, attainments, and lofty patriotism have reflected honor upon their constituency, and it is most meet that evidences of appreciation of such worth should distinguish those who thus represent and thus honor their native State.

The honors which you are about to confer on your distinguished fellow-citizen, are evidence of true self-respect and becoming State pride, in you and those you represent, as well as of grateful recollection towards the recipient. And though the faithful fellow-servant may receive his party honors around the party hearthstone, yet neighbors who have witnessed his willing sacrifices and enjoyed the benefit of his patriotic services may feel a desire to participate in the family festival. Deprived of that privilege, though grateful for an invitation to participate, I respectfully offer a sentiment, with the assurances of profound respect for those whom you represent, and personally for yourselves.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH R. CHANDLER.

Messrs. John Wales, John R. Latimer, John Connell.

The State of Delaware—The nursing mother of laborious statesmen: like Golconda, though limited in geographical dimensions, she is dis-

tinguished by the brilliancy and worth of that product from which the national jewels are constructed.

By the Committee.—The Hon. Joseph R. Chandler, the inflexible Whig representative of Philadelphia:—A bright example that industrious habits and spotless morals are sure passports to honor and renown.

[Thus far the proceedings are copied from the "North American."]

Morton McMichael, Esq., in an eloquent speech, replied to a toast complimentary to the Press, and in support of the great interests of the Whig party.

VOLUNTEER TOASTS.

By J. P. Comegys. Charles J. Dupont, President of the Day—The Whig party of Delaware is proud to number amongst its most cherished leaders this eminent citizen; one in whom are illustrated those virtues of head and heart which make man noble. May he long live to enjoy the respect and admiration which are felt for him by all classes of his fellow-citizens.

By Charles J. Dupont, President of the Day—Universal Education: The best security for public liberty; and, next to religion, the best safeguard of public morals.

By Z. B. Glazier. The Whigs of Delaware—like the Whigs of the Revolution, to whom defeat was always a prelude to victory.

By Major John Jones. Delaware—The first to adopt, so she will be the last to abandon, the Constitution.

By B. G. Grayson. The Whig party of the Confederacy—Whilst the union of the first continues, the perpetuity of the other is secure.

By W. T. Jeardell. J. M. Clayton—Delaware's noble, patriotic and cherished son.

By Wm. Sloanaker, of Philada. The Union—It will outlive all the assaults of its enemies.

By Eli Crozier. Major John Jones—His indefatigable exertions in behalf of Whig principles will never be forgotten.

By John Connell, one of the Vice Presidents. The first duty of every true patriot — the first duty of every good citizen — SUBMISSION TO THE LAWS.

By John A. Allderdice. William D. Lewis, Collector of the Port of Philadelphia—Persecution has tried him in a crucible, and found him pure gold.

Mr. Lewis, being loudly called for, rose and returned thanks to the following effect :

I rank, said he, Mr. President, among the happiest incidents of my life my presence here this evening. It is no small honor to have been invited to share with you the delight of hearing the unanswerable defence, to which we have just listened, of the last administration, and its late lamented chief whose heart beat only for his country, and in whose pure mind I have a right to say calumny could make no lodgment. But the allusion so kindly made to my humble self by your principal guest, our great statesman and friend, and the distinction just conferred upon me by the company, call for special acknowledgment. They shall always be held by me in grateful remembrance. Could it be otherwise? My lot having been long cast elsewhere, I am now standing almost on the spot of my birth. The air of Delaware is my natal air ; its sweet odor, "breathing the smell of field and grove," has lingered in my memory through all my wanderings, during an exile of more than forty years. Among those who surround me are some of my earliest friends, and the rest are descended from the friends of my ancestors. Thanking you, gentlemen, with all my heart for the compliment you have paid me, the value of which is enhanced by the fact of its having been proposed by one of your eminent citizens whom I meet to-day I believe for the first time ; and assuring you that, as it is my pride to possess, so shall it be my endeavor to retain, your good opinion, I ask leave, in conclusion, to offer the following sentiment :

THE STATE OF DELAWARE—a second Eden ; her sons living beyond her borders never cease to look back upon the spot once "their happy seat," with regret at their separation from it, and fond yearning for the hour of their return !

The toast was received with much enthusiasm, and, after several other volunteer toasts, the company adjourned at an early hour, highly gratified at the successful result of the brilliant festival, which was closed with nine cheers for the Honorable JOHN M. CLAYTON.

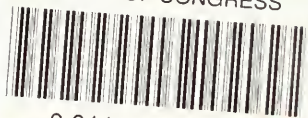


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